

**Listing of All Claims Including Current Amendments**

1. (currently amended) A mask, in particular photomask, for the production of semiconductor devices, comprising:  
at least one product field area with a structure comprising at least two different depths; and  
a compensation structure positioned outside and completely surrounding the at least one product field area, the compensation structure comprising at least two different depths substantially identical to the two different depths of the at least one product field area such that inner and outer portions of the at least one product field area have homogeneous etching process conditions, characterized in that the compensation structure comprises comprising at least one electroconductive region which is electrically conducting path-shaped area running through the compensation structure and electrically connected with the product field area.
2. (currently amended) The mask, in particular photomask, for the production of semiconductor devices, in accordance with claim 1, wherein – viewed from the product field area – the ~~electroconductive region~~ electrically conducting area extends path-shaped outwardly.
3. (currently amended) The mask, in particular photomask, for the production of semiconductor devices, in accordance with claim 2, wherein the path of the ~~electroconductive region~~ electrically conducting area has a breadth of between 1 nm and 30 nm or 200 nm and 5 mm, respectively, in particular between 1  $\mu\text{m}$  and 50  $\mu\text{m}$ , e.g. between 5  $\mu\text{m}$  and 25  $\mu\text{m}$ .
4. (currently amended) The mask, in particular photomask, for the production of semiconductor devices, in accordance with claim 3, wherein the ~~electroconductive~~

~~region~~ electrically conducting area substantially extends over the entire breadth of the compensation structure.

5. (currently amended) The mask, in particular photomask, for the production of semiconductor devices, according to claim 4, comprising a plurality of, in particular more than 10, 100, 1,000 or 10,000, ~~electroconductive regions~~ electrically conducting areas that are electrically connected with the product field area.

6. (currently amended) The mask, in particular photomask, for the production of semiconductor devices, according to claim 5, wherein – viewed from the product field area – the ~~electroconductive regions~~ electrically conducting areas each extend ~~path-shaped~~ outwardly.

7. (currently amended) The mask, in particular photomask, for the production of semiconductor devices, in accordance with claim 6, wherein the plurality of ~~electrical regions~~ electrically conducting areas form a grid structure.

8. (currently amended) The mask, in particular photomask, for the production of semiconductor devices, according to claim 7, wherein the ~~electroconductive region(s)~~ ~~is~~ ~~(are)~~ electrically conducting areas are designed of chrome.

9. (currently amended) The mask, in particular photomask, for the production of semiconductor devices, according to claim 8, wherein electrically non-conductive regions are positioned between the ~~electroconductive regions~~ electrically conducting areas.

10. (cancelled).

11. (currently amended) The mask, in particular photomask, for the production of semiconductor devices, according to claim 40 ~~9~~, wherein a respective plurality of electrically non-conductive regions that are positioned side by side, in particular more than 3, 50, or 500 electrically non-conductive regions that are positioned side by side, alternatingly have respectively differing depths ( $t_0$ ,  $t_1$ ).

12. (previously presented) The mask, in particular photomask, for the production of semiconductor devices, according to claim 11, wherein the electrically non-conductive regions are designed of quartz.

13. (currently amended) The mask, in particular photomask, for the production of semiconductor devices, according to claim 12, wherein the electrically non-conductive regions that are positioned between the ~~electroconductive regions~~ electrically conducting areas have a rectangular, in particular square, or a round or oval, respectively, cross-section.

14. (cancelled).

15. (currently amended) The mask, in particular photomask, for the production of semiconductor devices, according to claim 44- 15, wherein the compensation structure is frame-shaped.

16. (currently amended) The mask, in particular photomask, for the production of semiconductor devices, according to claim 15, said mask comprising a quartz and/or a chrome layer ~~(2, 3)~~.

17. (previously presented) The mask, in particular photomask, for the production of semiconductor devices, according to claim 16, wherein the mask is an alternating phase

shift mask, or a chromeless or a CPL (chromeless phase etch lithography) mask, respectively.

18. (currently amended) A method for the production of masks, in particular for the production of alternating phase shift masks, or of chromeless phase shift masks or phase shift masks structured by quartz etching, respectively, comprising at least one product field area with a structure comprising at least two different depths and a compensation structure positioned outside and completely surrounding the at least one product field area, characterized in that the method comprises the step: providing of the compensation structure with at least two different depths substantially identical to the two different depths of the at least one product field area such that inner and outer portions of the at least one product field area have homogeneous etching process conditions, and with at least one ~~electroconductive region which is — in the finished state of the mask —~~ electrically conducting path-shaped area running through the compensation structure and electrically connected with the product field area.